**The Grapes of Wrath**

**Full Summary**

Chapter One: Steinbeck begins the novel with a description of the dust bowl climate of Oklahoma. The dust was so thick that men and women had to remain in their houses, and when they had to leave they tied handkerchiefs over their faces and wore goggles to protect their eyes. After the wind had stopped, an even blanket of dust covered the earth. The corn crop was ruined. Everybody wondered what they would do. The women and children knew that no misfortune was too great to bear if their men were whole, but the men had not yet figured out what to do.

Chapter Two: A man approaches a small diner where a large red transport truck is parked. The man is under thirty, with dark brown eyes and high cheekbones. He wore new clothes that don't quite fit. The truck driver exits from the diner and the man asks him for a ride, despite the "No Riders" sticker on the truck. The man claims that sometimes a guy will do a good thing even when a rich bastard makes him carry a sticker, and the driver, feeling trapped by the statement, lets the man have a ride. While driving, the truck driver asks questions, and the man finally gives his name, Tom Joad. The truck driver claims that guys do strange things when they drive trucks, such as make up poetry, because of the loneliness of the job. The truck driver claims that his experience driving has trained his memory and that he can remember everything about a person he passes. Realizing that the truck driver is pressing for information, Tom finally admits that he had just been released from McAlester prison for homicide. He had been sentenced to seven years and was released after only four, for good behavior.

Chapter Three: At the side of the roadside, a turtle crawled, dragging his shell over the grass. He came to the embankment at the road and, with great effort, climbed onto the road. As the turtle attempts to cross the road, it is nearby hit by a sedan. A truck swerves to hit the turtle, but its wheel only strikes the edge of its shell and spins it back off the highway. The turtle lays on its back, but finally pulls itself over.

Chapter Four: After getting out of the truck, Tom Joad begins walking home. He sees the turtle of the previous chapter and picks it up. He stops in the shade of a tree to rest and meets a man who sits there, singing "Jesus is My Savior." The man, Jim Casy, had a long, bony frame and sharp features. A former minister, he recognizes Tom immediately. He was a "Burning Busher" who used to "howl out the name of Jesus to glory," but he lost the calling because he has too many sinful ideas that seem sensible. Tom tells Casy that he took the turtle for his little brother, and he replies that nobody can keep a turtle, for they eventually just go off on their own. Casy claims that he doesn't know where he's going now, and Tom tells him to lead people, even if he doesn't know where to lead them. Casy tells Tom that part of the reason he quit preaching was that he too often succumbed to temptation, having sex with many of the girls he Њsaved.' Finally he realized that perhaps what he was doing wasn't a sin, and there isn't really sin or virtue there are simply things people do.

He realized he didn't Њknow Jesus,' he merely knew the stories of the Bible. Tom tells Casy why he was in jail: he was at a dance drunk, and got in a fight with a man. The man cut Tom with a knife, so he hit him over the head with a shovel. Tom tells him that he was treated relatively well in McAlester. He ate regularly, got clean clothes and bathed. He even tells about how someone broke his parole to go back. Tom tells how his father Њstole' their house. There was a family living there that moved away, so his father, uncle and grandfather cut the house in two and dragged part of it first, only to find that Wink Manley took the other half. They get to the boundary fence of their property, and Tom tells him that they didn't need a fence, but it gave Pa a feeling that their forty acres was forty acres. Tom and Casy get to the house: something has happened nobody is there.

Chapter Five: This chapter describes the coming of the bank representatives to evict the farmers. Some of the men were kind because they knew how cruel their job was, while some were angry because they hated to be cruel, and others were merely cold and hardened by their job. They are mostly pawns of a system that they can merely obey. The tenant system has become untenable for the banks, for one man on a tractor can take the place of a dozen families. The farmers raise the possibility of armed insurrection, but what would they fight against? They will be murderers if they stay, fighting against the wrong targets.

Steinbeck describes the arrival of the tractors. They crawled over the ground, cutting the earth like surgery and violating it like rape. The tractor driver does his job simply out of necessity: he has to feed his kids, even if it comes at the expense of dozens of families. Steinbeck dramatizes a conversation between a truck driver and an evicted tenant farmer. The farmer threatens to kill the driver, but even if he does so, he will not stop the bank. Another driver will come. Even if the farmer murders the president of the bank and board of directors, the bank is controlled by the East. There is no effective target which could prevent the evictions.

Chapter Six: Casy and Tom approached the Joad home. The house was mashed at one corner and appeared deserted. Casy says that it looks like the arm of the Lord had struck. Tom can tell that Ma isn't there, for she would have never left the gate unhooked. They only see one resident (the cat), but Tom wonders why the cat didn't go to find another family if his family had moved, or why the neighbors hadn't taken the rest of the belongings in the house. Muley Graves approaches, a short, lean old man with the truculent look of an ornery child. Muley tells Tom that his mother was worrying about him. His family was evicted, and had to move in with his Uncle John. They were forced to chop cotton to make enough money to go west. Casy suggests going west to pick grapes in California. Muley tells Tom and Casy that the loss of the farm broke up his family his wife and kids went off to California, while Muley chose to stay. He has been forced to eat wild game. He muses about how angry he was when he was told he had to get off the land. First he wanted to kill people, but then his family left and Muley was left alone and wandering. He realized that he is used to the place, even if he has to wander the land like a ghost. Tom tells them that he can't go to California, for it would mean breaking parole. According to Tom, prison has not changed him significantly. He thinks that if he saw Herb Turnbull, the man he killed, coming after him with a knife again, he would still hit him with the shovel. Tom tells them that there was a man in McAlester that read a great deal about prisons and told him that they started a long time ago and now cannot be stopped, despite the fact that they do not actually rehabilitate people. Muley tells them that they have to hide, for they are trespassing on the land. They have to hide in a cave for the night.

Chapter Seven: The car dealership owners look at their customers. They watch for weaknesses, such as a woman who wants an expensive car and can push her husband into buying one. They attempt to make the customers feel obliged. The proffts come from selling jalopies, not from new and dependable cars. There are no guarantees, hidden costs and obvious flaws.

Chapter Eight: Tom and Casy reach Uncle John's farm. They remark that Muley's lonely and covert lifestyle has obviously driven him insane. According to Tom, his Uncle John is equally crazy, and wasn't expected to live long, yet is older than his father. Still, he is tougher and meaner than even Grampa, hardened by losing his young wife years ago. They see Pa Joad fixing the truck. When he sees Tom, he assumes that he broke out of jail. They go in the house and see Ma Joad, a heavy woman thick with child-bearing and work. Her face was controlled and kindly. She worries that Tom went mad in prison. This chapter also introduces Grampa and Granma Joad. She is as tough as he is, once shooting her husband while she was speaking in tongues. Noah Joad, Tom's older brother, is a strange man, slow and withdrawn, with little pride and few urges. He may have been brain damaged at childbirth. The family has dinner, and Casy says grace. He talks about how Jesus went off into the wilderness alone, and how he did the same. Yet what Casy concluded was that mankind was holy. Pa tells Tom about Al, his sixteen-year old brother, who is concerned with little more than girls and cars. He hasn't been at home at night for a week. His sister Rosasharn has married Connie Rivers, and is several months pregnant. They have two hundred dollars for their journey.

Chapter Nine: This chapter describes the process of selling belongings. The items pile up in the yard, selling for ridiculously low prices. Whatever is not sold must be burned, even items of sentimental value that simply cannot be taken on the journey for lack of space.

Chapter Ten: Ma Joad tells Tom that she is concerned about going to California, worried that it won't turn out well, for the only information they have is from flyers they read. Casy asks to accompany them to California. He wants to work in the fields, where he can listen to people rather than preach to them. Tom says that preaching is a tone of voice and a style, being good to people when they don't respond to it. Pa and Uncle John return with the truck, and prepare to leave. The two children, twelve-year old Ruthie and ten-year old Winfield are there with their older sister, Rose of Sharon (Rosasharn) and her husband. They discuss how Tom can't leave the state because of his parole. They have a family conference that night and discuss a number of issues: they decide to allow Casy to go with them, since it's the only right thing for them to do. They continue with preparations, killing the pigs to have food to take with them. While Casy helps out Ma Joad with food preparation, he remarks to Tom that she looks tired, as if she is sick. Ma Joad looks through her belongings, going through old letters and clippings she had saved. She has to place them in the fire. Before they leave, Muley Graves stops to say goodbye. Noah tells him that he's going to die out in the field if he stays, but Muley accepts his fate. Grampa refuses to leave, so they decide to give him medicine that will knock him out and take him with them.

Chapter Eleven: The houses were left vacant. Only the tractor sheds of gleaming iron and silver were alive. Yet when the tractors are at rest the life goes out of them. The work is easy and efficient, so easy that the wonder goes out of the work and so efficient that the wonder goes out of the land and the working of it. In the tractor man there grows the contempt that comes to a stranger who has little understanding and no relation to the land. The abandoned houses slowly fall apart.

Chapter Twelve: Highway 66 is the main migrant road stretching from the Mississippi to Bakersfield, California. It is a road of flight for refugees from the dust and shrinking land. The people streamed out on 66, possibly breaking down in their undependable cars on the way. Yet the travelers face obstacles. California is a big state, but not big enough to support all of the workers who are coming. The border patrol can turn people back. The high wages that are promised may be false.

Chapter Thirteen: The Joads continue on their travels. Al remarks that they may have trouble getting over mountains in their car, which can barely support its weight. Grampa Joad wakes up and insists that he's not going with them. They stop at a gas station where the owner automatically assumes they are broke, and tells them that people often stop, begging for gas. The owner claims that fifty cars per day go west, but wonders what they expect when they reach their destination. He tells how one family traded their daughter's doll for some gas. Casy wonders what the nation is coming to, since people seem unable to make a decent living. Casy says that he used to use his energy to fight against the devil, believing that the devil was the enemy. However, now he believes that there's something worse. The Joad's dog wanders from the car and is run over in the road. They continue on their journey and begin to worry when they reach the state line. However, Tom reassures them that he is only in danger if he commits a crime. Otherwise, nobody will know that he has broken his parole by leaving the state. On their next stop for the night, the Joads meet the Wilsons, a family from Kansas that is going to California. Grampa complains of illness, and weeps. The family thinks that he may suffer a stroke. Granma tells Casy to pray for Grampa, even if he is no longer a preacher. Suddenly Grampa starts twitching and slumps. He dies. The Joads face a choice: they can pay fifty dollars for a proper burial for him or have him buried a pauper. They decide to bury Grampa themselves and leave a note so that people don't assume he was murdered. The Wilsons help them bury Grampa. They write a verse from scripture on the note on his grave. After burying Grampa, they have Casy say a few words. The reactions to the death are varied. Rose of Sharon comforts Granma, while Uncle John is curiously unmoved by the turn of events. Casy admits that he knew Grampa was dying, but didn't say anything because he couldn't have helped. He blames the separation from the land for Grampa's death. The Joads and the Sairy Wilson decide to help each other on the journey by spreading out the load between their two cars so that both families will make it to California.

Chapter Fourteen: The Western States are nervous about the impending changes, including the widening government, growing labor unity, and strikes. However, they do not realize that these are results of change and not causes of it. The cause is the hunger of the multitude. The danger that they face is that the people's problems have moved from "I" to "we."

Chapter Fifteen: This chapter begins with a description of the hamburger stands and diners on Route 66. The typical diner is run by a usually irritated woman who nevertheless becomes friendly when truck drivers consistent customers who can always pay enter. The more wealthy travelers drop names and buy vanity products. The owners of the diners complain about the migrating workers, who can't pay and often steal. A family comes in, wanting to buy a loaf of bread. The one owner, Mae, tells them that they're not a grocery store, but Al, the other, tells them to just sell the bread. Mae sells the family candy for reduced prices. Mae and Al wonder what such families will do once they reach California.

Chapter Sixteen: The Joads and the Wilsons continue on their travels. Rose of Sharon discusses with her mother what they will do when they reach California. She and Connie want to live in a town, where he can get a job in a store or a factory. He wants to study at home, possibly taking a radio correspondence course. There is a rattling in the Wilson's car, so Al is forced to pull over. There are problems with the motor. Sairy Wilson tells them that they should go on ahead without them, but Ma Joad refuses, telling them that they are like family now and they won't desert them. Tom says that he and Casy will stay with the truck if everyone goes on ahead. They'll fix the car and then move on. Only Ma objects. She refuses to go, for the only thing that they have left is each other and she will not break up the family even momentarily. When everyone else objects to her, she even picks up a jack handle and threatens them. Tom and Casy try to fix the car, and Casy remarks about how he has seen so many cars moving west, but no cars going east. Casy predicts that all of the movement and collection of people in California will change the country. The two of them stay with the car while the family goes ahead. Before they leave, Al tells Tom that Ma is worried that he will do something that might break his parole. Granma has been going crazy, yelling and talking to herself.

Al asks Tom about what he felt when he killed a man. Tom admits that prison has a tendency to drive a man insane. Tom and Al find a junkyard where they find a part to replace the broken con-rod in the Wilson's car. The one-eyed man working at the junkyard complains about his boss, and says that he might kill him. Tom tells off the one-eyed man for blaming all of his problems on his eye, and then criticizes Al for his constant worry that people will blame him for the car breaking down. Tom, Casy and Al rejoin the rest of the family at a campground not far away. To stay at the campground, the three would have to pay an additional charge, for they would be charged with vagrancy if they slept out in the open. Tom, Casy and Uncle John eventually decide to go on ahead and meet up with everyone else in the morning. A ragged man at the camp, when he hears that the Joads are going to pick oranges in California, laughs. The man, who is returning from California, tells how the handbills are a fraud. They ask for eight hundred people, but get several thousand people who want to work. This drives down wages. The proprietor of the campground suspects that the ragged man is trying to stir up trouble for labor.

Chapter Seventeen: A strange thing happened for the migrant laborers. During the day, as they traveled, the cars were separate and lonely, yet in the evening a strange thing happened: at the campgrounds where they stayed the twenty or so families became one. Their losses and their concerns became communal. The families were at first timid, but they gradually built small societies within the campgrounds, with codes of behavior and rights that must be observed. For transgressions, there were only two punishments: violence or ostracism. Leaders emerged, generally the wise elders. The various families found connections to one another

Chapter Eighteen: When the Joads reach Arizona, a border guard stops them and nearly turns them back, but does let them continue. They eventually reach the desert of California. The terrain is barren and desolate. While washing themselves during a stop, the Joads encounter migrant workers who want to turn back. They tell them that the Californians hate the migrant workers. A good deal of the land is owned by the Land and Cattle Company that leaves the land largely untouched. Sheriffs push around migrant workers, whom they derisively call "Okies." Noah tells Tom that he is going to leave everyone, for they don't care about him. Although Tom protests, Noah leaves them. Granma remains ill, suffering from delusions. She believes that she sees Grampa. A Jehovite woman visits their tent to help Granma, and tells Ma that she will die soon. The woman wants to organize a prayer meeting, but Ma orders them not to do so. Nevertheless, soon she can hear from a distance chanting and singing that eventually descends into crying. Granma whines with the whining, then eventually falls asleep. Rose of Sharon wonders where Connie is. Deputies come to the tent and tell Ma that they cannot stay there and that they don't want any Okies around. Tom returns to the tent after the policeman leaves, and is glad that he wasn't there; he admits that he would have hit the cop. He tells Ma about Noah. The Wilsons decide to remain even if they face arrest, since Sairy is too sick to leave without any rest. Sairy asks Casy to say a prayer for her. The Joads move on, and at a stop a boy remarks how hard-looking Okies are and how they are less than human. Uncle John speaks with Casy, worried that he brings bad luck to people. Connie and Rose of Sharon need privacy. Yet again the Joads are pulled over for inspection, but Ma Joad insists that they must continue because Granma needs medical attention. The next morning when they reach the orange groves, Ma tells them that Granma is dead. She died before they were pulled over for inspection.

Chapter Nineteen: California once belonged to Mexico and its land to the Mexicans. But a horde of tattered feverish American poured in, with such great hunger for the land that they took it. Farming became an industry as the Americans took over. They imported Chinese, Japanese, Mexican and Filipino workers who became essentially slaves. The owners of the farms ceased to be farmers and became businessmen. They hated the Okies who came because they could not profft from them. Other laborers hated the Okies because they pushed down wages. While the Californians had aspirations of social success and luxury, the barbarous Okies only wanted land and food. Hoovervilles arose at the edge of every town. The Okies were forced to secretly plant gardens in the evenings. The deputies overreacted to the Okies, spurred by stories that an eleven year old Okie shot a deputy. The great owners realized that when property accumulates in too few hands it is taken away and that when a majority of the people are hungry and cold they will take by force what they need.

Chapter Twenty: The Joads take Granma to the Bakersfield coroner's office. They can't afford a funeral for her. They go to a camp to stay and ask about work. They ask a bearded man if he owns the camp and whether they can stay, and he replies with the same question to them. A younger man tells them that the crazy old man is called the Mayor. According to the man, the Mayor has likely been pushed by the police around so much that he's been made bull-simple (crazy). The police don't want them to settle down, for then they could draw relief, organize and vote. The younger man tells them about the handbill fraud, and Tom suggests that everybody organize so that they could guarantee higher wages. The man warns Tom about the blacklist. If he is labeled an agitator he will be prevented from getting from anybody. Tom talks to Casy, who has recently been relatively quiet. Casy says that the people unorganized are like an army without a harness. Casy says that he isn't helping out the family and should go off by himself. Tom tries to convince him to stay at least until the next day, and he relents. Connie regrets his decision to come with the Joads. He says that if he had stayed in Oklahoma he could have worked as a tractor driver. When Ma is fixing dinner, groups of small children approach, asking for food. The children tell the Joads about Weedpatch, a government camp that is nearby where no cops can push people around and there is good drinking water. Al goes around looking for girls, and brags about how Tom killed a man. Al meets a man named Floyd Knowles, who tells them that there was no steady work. A woman reprimands Ma Joad for giving her children stew. Al brings Floyd back to the family, where he says that there will be work up north around Santa Clara Valley. He tells them to leave quietly, because everyone else will follow after the work. Al wants to go with Floyd no matter what. A man arrives in a Chevrolet coupe, wearing a business suit. He tells them about work picking fruit around Tulare County. Floyd tells the man to show his license -this is one of the tricks that the contractor uses. Floyd points out some of the dirty tactics that the contractor is using, such as bringing along a cop. The cop forces Floyd into the car and says that the Board of Health might want to shut down their camp. Floyd punched the cop and ran off. As the deputy chased after him, Tom tripped him. The deputy raised his gun to shoot Floyd and fires indiscriminately, shooting a woman in the hand. Suddenly Casy kicked the deputy in the back of the neck, knocking him unconscious. Casy tells Tom to hide, for the contractor saw him trip the deputy. More officers come to the scene, and they take away Casy, who has a faint smile and a look of pride. Rose of Sharon wonders where Connie has gone. She has not seen him recently. Uncle John admits that he had five dollars. He kept it to get drunk. Uncle John gives them the five in exchange for two, which is enough for him. Al tells Rose of Sharon that he saw Connie, who was leaving. Pa claims that Connie was too big for his overalls, but Ma scolds him, telling him to act respectfully, as if Connie were dead. Because the cops are going to burn the camp tonight, they have to leave. Tom goes to find Uncle John, who has gone off to get drunk. Tom finds him by the river, singing morosely. He claims that he wants to die. Tom has to hit him to make him come. Rose of Sharon wants to wait for Connie to return. They leave the camp, heading north toward the government camp.

Chapter Twenty-One: The hostility that the migrant workers faced changed them. They were united as targets of hostility, and this unity made the little towns of Hoovervilles defend themselves. There was panic when the migrants multiplied on the highways. The California residents feared them, thinking them dirty, ignorant degenerates and sexual maniacs. The number of migrant workers caused the wages to go down. The owners invented a new method: the great owners bought canneries, where they kept the price of fruit down to force smaller farmers out. The owners did not know that the line between hunger and anger is a thin one.

Chapter Twenty-Two: The Joads reach the government camp, where they are surprised to find that there are toilets and showers and running water. The watchman at the camp explains some of the other features of the camp: there is a central committee elected by the camp residents that keeps order and makes rules, and the camp even holds dance nights. The next morning, two camp residents (Timothy and Wilkie Wallace) give Tom breakfast and tell him about work. When they reach the fields where they are to work, Mr. Thomas, the contractor, tells them that he is reducing wages from thirty to twenty-five cents per hour. It is not his choice, but rather orders from the Farmers' Association, which is owned by the Bank of the West. Thomas also shows them a newspaper, which has a story about a band of citizens who burn a squatters' camp, infuriated by presumed communist agitation, and warns them about the dance at the government camp on Saturday night. There will be a fight in the camp so that the deputies can go in. The Farmers' Association dislikes the government camps because the people in the camps become used to being treated humanely and are thus harder to handle. Tom and the Wallaces vow to make sure that there won't be a fight.

While they work, Wilkie tells Tom that the complaints about agitators are false. According to the rich owners, any person who wants thirty cents an hour instead of twenty-five is a red. Back at the camp, Ruthie and Winfield explore the camp, and are fascinated by the toilets they are frightened by the flushing sound. Ma Joad makes the rest of the family clean themselves up before the Ladies Committee comes to visit her. Jim Rawley, the camp manager, introduces himself to the Joads and tells them some of the features of the camp. Rose of Sharon goes to take a bath, and learns that a nurse visits the camp every week and can help her deliver the baby when it is time. Ma remarks that she no longer feels ashamed, as she had when they were constantly harassed by the police. Lisbeth Sandry, a religious zealot, speaks with Rose of Sharon about the alleged sin that goes on during the dances, and complains about people putting on stage plays, which she calls Њsin and delusion and devil stuff.' The woman even blames playacting for a mother dropping her child. Rose of Sharon becomes frightened upon hearing this, fearing that she will drop her child. Jessie Bullitt, the head of the Ladies Committee, gives Ma Joad a tour of the camp and explains some of the problems. Jessie bickers with Ella Summers, the previous committee head. The children play and bicker. Pa comforts Uncle John, who still wants to leave, thinking that he will bring the family punishment. Ma Joad confronts Lisbeth Sandry for frightening Rose and for preaching that every action is sinful. Ma becomes depressed about all of the losses Granma and Grampa, John and Connie because she now has leisure time to think about such things.

Chapter Twenty-Three: The migrant workers looked for amusement wherever they could find it, whether in jokes or stories for amusement. They told stories of heroism in taming the land against the Indians, or about a rich man who pretended to be poor and fell in love with a rich woman who was also pretending to be poor. The workers took small pleasures in playing the harmonica or a more precious guitar or fiddle, or even in getting drunk.

Chapter Twenty-Four: The rumors that the police were going to break up the dance reached the camp. According to Ezra Huston, the chairman of the Central Committee, this is a frequent tactic that the police use. Huston tells Willie Eaton, the head of the entertainment committee, that if he must hit a deputy, do so where they won't bleed. The camp members say that the Californians hate them because the migrants might draw relief without paying income tax, but they refute this, claiming that they pay sales tax and tobacco tax. At the dance, Willie Eaton approaches Tom and tells him where to watch for intruders. Ma comforts Rose of Sharon, who is depressed about Connie. Tom finds the intruders at the dance, but the intruders begin a fight and immediately the police enter the camp. Huston confronts the police about the intruders, asking who paid them. They only admit that they have to make money somehow. Once the problem is defused, the dance goes on without any problems.

Chapter Twenty-Five: Spring is beautiful in California, for behind the fruitfulness of the trees in the orchards are men of understanding who experiment with the seeds and crops to defend them against insects and disease. Yet the fruits become rotten and soft. The rotten grapes are still used for wine, even if contaminated with mildew and formic acid. The rationale is that it is good enough for the poor to get drunk. The decay of the fruit spreads over the state. The men who have created the new fruits cannot create a system whereby the fruits may be eaten. There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation, a sorrow that weeping cannot symbolize. Children must die from pellagra because the profft cannot be taken from an orange.

Chapter Twenty-Six: One evening, Ma Joad watches Winfield as he sleeps; he writhes as he sleeps, and he seems discolored. In the month that the Joads have been in Weedpatch, Tom has had only five days of work, and the rest of the men have had none. Ma worries because Rose of Sharon is close to delivering her baby. Ma reprimands them for becoming discouraged. She tells them that in such circumstances they don't have the right. Pa fears that they will have to leave Weedpatch. When Tom mentions work in Marysville, Ma decides that they will go there, for despite the accommodations at Weedpatch, they have no opportunity to make money. They plan to go north, where the cotton will soon be ready for harvest. Regarding Ma Joad's forceful control of the family, Pa remarks that women seem to be in control, and it may be time to get out a stick. Ma hears this, and tells him that she is doing her job as wife, but he certainly isn't doing his job as husband. Rose of Sharon complains that if Connie hadn't left they would have had a house by now. Ma pierces Rose of Sharon's ears so that she can wear small gold earrings. Al parts ways with a blonde girl that he has been seeing; she rejects his promises that they will eventually get married. He promises her that he'll return soon, but she does not believe him. Pa remarks that he only notices that he stinks now that he takes regular baths. Before they leave, Willie remarks that the deputies don't bother the residents of Weedpatch because they are united, and that their solution may be a union.

The car starts to break down as the Joads leave Al has let the battery run down but he fixes the problem and they continue on their way. Al is irritable as they leave. He says that he's going out on his own soon to start a family. On the road, they get a flat tire. While Tom fixes the tire, a businessman stops in his car and offers them a job picking peaches forty miles north. They reach the ranch at Pixley where they are to pick oranges for five cents a box. Even the women and children can do the job. Ruthie and Winfield worry about settling down in the area and going to school in California. They assume that everyone will call them Okies. At the nearby grocery store owned by Hooper Ranch, Ma finds that the prices are much higher than they would be at the store in town. The sales clerk lends Ma ten cents for sugar. She tells him that it is only poor people who will help out. That night, Tom goes for a walk, but a deputy tells him to walk back to the cabin at the ranch. The deputy claims that if Tom is alone, the reds will get to him.

While continuing on his walk, Tom finds Casy, who has been released from jail. He is with a group of men that are on strike. Casy claims that people who strive for justice always face opposition, citing Lincoln and Washington, as well as the martyrs of the French Revolution. Casy, Tom and the rest of the strikers are confronted by the police. A short, heavy man with a white pick handle swings it at Casy, hitting him in the head. Tom fights with the man, and eventually wrenches the club from him and strikes him with it, killing him. Tom immediately fled the scene, crawling through a stream to get back to the cabin. He cannot sleep that night, and in the morning tells Ma that he has to hide. He tells her that he was spotted, and warns his family that they are breaking the strike they are getting five cents a box only because of this, and today may only get half that amount. When Tom tells Ma that he is going to leave that night, she tells him that they aren't a family anymore: Al cares about nothing more than girls, Uncle John is only dragging along, Pa has lost his place as the head of the family, and the children are becoming unruly. Rose of Sharon screams at Tom for murdering the man she thinks that his sin will doom her baby. After a day of work, Winfield becomes extremely sick from eating peaches. Uncle John tells Tom that when the police catch him, there will be a lynching. Tom insists that he must leave, but Ma insists that they leave as a family. They hide Tom as they leave, taking the back roads to avoid police.

Chapter Twenty-Seven: Those who want to pick cotton must first purchase a bag before they can make money. The men who weigh the cotton fix the scales to cheat the workers. The introduction of a cotton-picking machine seems inevitable.

Chapter Twenty-Eight: The Joads now stay in a boxcar that stood beside the stream, a small home that proved better than anything except for the government camp. They were now picking cotton. Winfield tells Ma that Ruthie told about Tom she got into an argument with some other kids, and told them that her brother was on the run for committing murder. Ruthie returns to Ma, crying that the kids stole her Cracker Jack the reason that she threatened them by telling about Tom but Ma tells her that it was her own fault for showing off her candy to others. That night, in the pitch black, Ma Joad goes out into the woods and finds Tom, who has been hiding out there. She crawls close to him and wants to touch him to remember what he looked like. She wants to give him seven dollars to take the bus and get away. He tells her that he has been thinking about Casy, and remembered how Casy said that he went out into the woods searching for his soul, but only found that he had no individual soul, but rather part of a larger one. Tom has been wondering why people can't work together for their living, and vows to do what Casy had done. He leaves, but promises to return to the family when everything has blown over. As she left, Ma Joad did not cry, but rain began to fall. When she returned to the boxcar, she meets Mr. and Mrs. Wainwright, who have come to talk to the Joads about their daughter, Aggie, who has been spending time with Al. They're worried that the two families will part and then find out that Aggie is pregnant. Ma tells them that she found Tom and that he is gone. Pa laments leaving Oklahoma, while Ma says that women can deal with change better than a man, because women have their lives in their arms, and men have it in their heads. For women, change is more acceptable because it seems inevitable. Al and Aggie return to the boxcar, and they announce that they are getting married. They go out before dawn to pick cotton before everyone else can get the rest, and Rose of Sharon vows to go with them, even though she can barely move. When they get to the place where the cotton is being picked, there are already a number of families. While picking cotton, it suddenly starts to rain, causing Rose of Sharon to fall ill. Everybody assumes that she is about to deliver, but she instead suffers from a chill. They take her back to the boxcar and start a fire to get her warm.

Chapter Twenty-Nine: The migrant families wondered how long the rain would last. The rain damaged cars and penetrated tents. During the rain storms some people went to relief offices, but there were rules: one had to live in California a year before he could collect relief. The greatest terror had arrived no work would be available for three months. Hungry men crowded the alleys to beg for bread; a number of people died. Anger festered, causing sheriffs to swear in new deputies. There would be no work and no food.

Chapter Thirty: After three days of rain, the Wainwrights decide that they have to keep on going. They fear that the creek will flood. Rose of Sharon goes into labor, and the Joads cannot leave. Pa Joad and the rest of the man at the camp build up the embankment to prevent flooding, but the water breaks through. Pa, Al and Uncle John rush toward the car, but it cannot start. They reach the boxcar and find that Rose of Sharon delivered a stillborn baby. They realize that the car will eventually flood, and Mr. Wainwright blames Pa Joad for asking them to stay and help, but Mrs. Wainwright offers them help. She tells Ma Joad that it once was the case that family came first. Now they have greater concerns. Uncle John places the dead baby in an apple box and floats it down the flooded stream as Al and build a platform on the top of the car. As the flood waters rise, the family remains on the platform. The family finds a barn for refuge until the rain stops. In the corner of the barn there are a starving man and a boy. Ma and Rose of Sharon realize what she must do. Ma makes everybody leave the barn, while Rose of Sharon gives the dying man her breast milk.